

Assignment for class 2

In class presentations for Monday Jan 10.

Each week discussion leaders will prepare to instigate and direct group discussion around assigned topics. You will do this for about 30 minutes. Everyone is responsible for considering and contributing to the topic, and the discussion leader is to focus the discussion. Determine the key points, frame a few key questions, stimulate discussion. Your formal presentation should take no more than 10 minutes.

1. Define “habitus” in Bourdieu’s thought.
2. In the middle of p. 107 (first full paragraph, beginning “to account for...”) Bourdieu is making a distinct argument about methodology and the principles involved in defining class (and as we will see, other areas of investigation in his other works). Help us all define and discuss this.
3. Make a first attempt at applying the chart on p. 128/129 (Fig. 5 and 6) to contemporary US society.

CMS assignment. The three in-class presenters are exempt from this assignment. Everyone else must put it on CMS by **5 pm Saturday**.

Write a report based on fieldwork or interviews or personal history that deals with some aspect of the ideas on class and taste and taste formation as discussed by Bourdieu. The goal here is for you to take some of the major ideas in the first half of *Distinction* and test them against your own investigation. 1000 words is appropriate.

1. “Taste is a matchmaker.” (p. 243) Discuss in terms of friendship, dating, courtship, etc. What are the promises of different matchmaking and dating services based on their advertising? For example, ads for services in the Yellow Pages, or the Reader. Or personal ads in the Reader, Windy City Times, New York Review of Books, etc. Or you could elaborate this in terms of bar culture, club culture, etc. What are the comparative and contrasting styles of different places? What would you expect?
2. What are the taste and class differences in various magazines? A trip to Barnes and Noble or Border’s magazine racks should provide examples. E.g., women’s/homemaker magazines? Compare and contrast. Or food magazines, or dining out publications, etc. or motor sports publications. Or lifestyle publications such as *Cosmopolitan* or *Outlaw Biker*.
3. Compare and contrast the recreational images of the candidates from the 04 Presidential campaign. (Google image search might be a start, or the newsmagazines.) For example, the photo ops of Kerry windsurfing, or goose hunting vs. those of Bush

cutting brush on his ranch. There was a fair amount of editorial commentary on this material.

4. Figure out a way to investigate and report on what seems to you a class marked food culture. (see for example, p. 186) Example: a site visit to a food store distinctly different than your regular range of stores. Thus if you regularly shop at Jewel or Dominick's, an upscale place like Foodstuffs (on Central in Evanston), or Whole Foods, or a downscale place like one of the Latino markets on N. Clark St (changes to Chicago Ave in Evanston), or Cub Foods in Chicago. Or a restaurant that seems to serve a working class clientele (e.g., taxi drivers; multi-Asian place on Argyle under the el).

5. Compare and contrast taste differences in weddings. You can report on ones you have attended, or base it on bride magazines, etc.

6. Compare and contrast taste differences in wine or beer consumption. E.g., the microbrewery or wine boutique vs. Osco/Jewel.

7. Compare and contrast health clubs, spas, gyms, etc. Or hair cutting and styling, etc. Consider cost, clientele, ambience, services, expectations, etc.